

CHILD PROTECTION - EMPLOYEES & VOLUNTEERS

1. Area Of Responsibility

Administration

2. Date Last Updated

22 August, 2008

3. Purpose

To ensure that all employees and volunteers that work for Queensland Little Athletics and its affiliates are assessed (where appropriate) for their suitability to work with children under the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 2000 (Qld)*.

To ensure that all affiliates are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the above.

4. Policy

Background

The State Government passed legislation "the Commission for Children and Young People Act 2000 (Qld)" in May 2000. The purpose of the Commission is to protect children from harm and promote their well-being.

As of 1 May 2001, all regularly employed personnel involved in child related work are required to undergo a suitability check based on the person's criminal history. There is a cost involved with suitability checks, which is to be met by the employee or employer. Employees commencing this type of work prior to 1 May 2001 were not required to apply for a suitability check.

As at 1 May 2002, all volunteer personnel (as defined below), who work with children, are required to undergo a suitability check. The same procedure as per employed staff applies, however, it is provided free of charge.

Employees Required To Apply For A Criminal History Check

Paid employees need a blue card if, over the course of 12 months, the usual functions of their employment includes or is likely to include:

- providing services directed mainly towards children; or
- conducting activities mainly involve children.

for at least:

- eight consecutive days, or
- once a week, each week, over four weeks, or
- once a fortnight, each fortnight, over eight weeks, or
- once a month, each month over six months.

QLAA will ensure that all its employees who work with children undergo a suitability check.

Volunteers Required To Apply For A Criminal History Check

All volunteers need a blue card if the usual functions include or are likely to include:

- providing services directed mainly towards children; or
- conducting activities mainly involve children.

It is QLAA's requirement that all - coaches, officials, administrators, committee members and any other personnel, who perform regular duties in the various competitions and State Team or on behalf of QLAA, and who are working with children under the age of 18 years, apply for a criminal history check.

It is strongly recommended that Centres adopt the above requirement in their local policy.

Exemptions

Volunteers do not need a blue card if:

- they are a volunteer parent of a child in relation to whom the activities are conducted; or
- a child under 18 years of age volunteering (except “trainee students” undertaking a course of study with an “education provider”)

NB: It is a QLAA requirement that if the parent/s is performing in an official capacity ie: coaching, officiating and team management at a State level and they do not have children participating at the event, **they will be required to apply for a criminal history check.**

The Application Process

Employees

Step 1

All employees (as defined above) must fill out the application and consent to the criminal history check. Proof of identification documents must be included as per the form, including one with the applicant's signature.

NB: The Application for a Prospective Paid Employee form or can be found on the QLAA web site www.qlaa.asn.au or on the Commission's web site www.bluecard.qld.gov.au

Step 2

The Employer must sight original documentation, proving the applicant's identity as listed in the application form, prior to sending to the Commission.

Step 3

Upon receipt of the application the Commission will perform the relevant checks and assess the person's suitability to work with children.

Step 4

If an applicant is deemed suitable, a suitability notice (in the form of a blue plastic Suitability Card) is then issued to the applicant. This card will be valid for 2 years and a renewal notice will be sent to the employee close to expiry. The Employer will also be notified by the Commission of the applicant's suitability status and should keep this on record.

Volunteers

Step 1

Each Centre will need to appoint a Volunteer Coordinator (eg a Committee member) who will be responsible for coordinating, documenting and forwarding applications to the Commission.

Volunteers who perform functions directly for or on behalf of QLAA or have State Team duties (and do not have any involvement at a Centre level) would apply directly to the QLAA Secretary. For those already involved at a Centre level, they would need to be registered through their Centre in the first instance and QLAA would seek that information from that Centre as appropriate.

Step 2

All volunteers (as defined above) must fill out the application and consent to the criminal history check. Proof of identification documents must be included as per the form, including one with the applicant's signature.

NB: The Volunteer Information Sheet and Application form can be found on the QLAA web site www.qlaa.asn.au or on the Commission's web site www.bluecard.qld.gov.au

Step 3

The Volunteer Coordinator must sight original documentation, proving the applicant's identity as listed in the application form, prior to sending to the Commission. A checklist is provided with the Volunteer Application Form and should be referred to prior to forwarding to the Commission.

Step 4

Upon receipt of the application the Commission will perform the relevant checks (as per the Volunteer Information Sheet) and assess the person's suitability to work with children.

Step 5

If an applicant is deemed suitable, a suitability notice (in the form of a blue plastic Suitability Card) is then issued to the applicant. This card will be valid for 2 years and is transferable across certain child-related employment (refer to Volunteer Information Sheet). The Centre/ Association will also be notified by the Commission of the applicant's suitability status and should record this with current membership details.

Responsibilities Of Volunteer Co-ordinator / Association

Centres will be responsible for ensuring all volunteers (as defined above) have their suitability checked. The State Government under the Act will impose penalties, if these policies and procedures are not adhered to.

The Volunteer Coordinator is integral in meeting the processing requirements of this policy and must strictly adhere to privacy provisions in relation to the storage, handling and forwarding of applicant information to the Commission.

Unsuitable Employees / Volunteers

If an applicant is deemed unsuitable, a negative suitability notice is issued by the Commission, which prohibits the applicant from working/volunteering in the child-related employment. In this instance the applicant will be notified by the Commission and provided with an opportunity to respond.

The unsuitable applicant is entitled to have the Commissioner's decision reviewed by the Children Services Tribunal. The tribunal is an independent body that hears appeals in matters pertaining to the Commission. QLAA does not have any involvement or jurisdiction on matters relating to the suitability or non-suitability of applicants.

Employees / Volunteers With Criminal Histories

A criminal history does not necessarily preclude an applicant from being deemed suitable. The applicant is entitled to provide submissions regarding the information on his or her criminal history and suitability for child related employment. The Commission will then assess the nature and circumstances surrounding the offence/s before making a final decision.

Non-Compliance Of Employers / Volunteers

If an employee/volunteer falls into the definitions provided in this policy and the relevant Information sheets, and does not apply for a suitability check, penalties will be imposed under the Act. Refer to the Information Sheets for the definitions of failure for an employer and a volunteer to comply.

Change Of An Employees / Volunteer's Criminal History

Employees/volunteers must immediately disclose to their organisation any change in their criminal history. The exact nature of the change is not required just that a change has occurred. Refer to the relevant Information Sheet for further information.

Further Information / Assistance

For more information please contact QLAA or refer to the Policies section of the QLAA website www.qlaa.asn.au or the Commission for Children & Young People on 1800 113611 or website www.bluecard.qld.gov.au

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